

# AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

## TELEVISION

### How to Judge Your Story

AL PERKINS

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Ann Arbor, Mich.

## ACTION MAKES THE JUVENILE

LOIS EBY

## YOUR KEY TO CHARACTER DRAWING

LLOYD ERIC REEVE

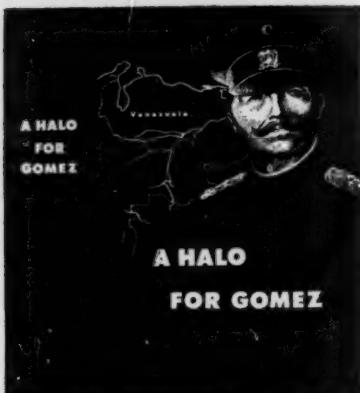
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## Bergman's Annual Survey of Comic Books . . . Contests . . . What Magazine Editors Are Buying

Market List:  
Comic Books

# DON'T ENVY THIS AUTHOR...Emulate him!

Instead of merely *wishing* for success, John Lavin reached out for it! Now he's an internationally recognized author, and Best Book prize-winner. Within four months after publication, his book was snapped up for a Spanish edition, and serial rights were sold to a big magazine . . . thanks to the wonderful publishing plan of Pageant Press. (WRITE FOR OUR FREE BOOK and details about our \$1600 BEST BOOK CONTEST FOR 1955.)



The colorful jacket of *A HALO FOR GOMEZ* designed by Dave Lyons.  
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#### WRITE FOR FREE DETAILS

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lavin was born in Sète, France, the son of a French mother and a Chilean-born American engineer.

He arrived in Venezuela while Gómez was still in power. He saw the chain gangs on the roads, talked with men whose legs bore the marks of prison irons, and observed the almost incredible honesty of the country cowed by the regime into an intense fear of law breaking. Listening to current praise and disparagement of the iron-fisted dictator, and acquiring an avid interest in Venezuela and her people, he began intensive research which evolved into an historical biography that depicts Gómez and his regime honestly and impartially.

John Lavin's "A HALO FOR GÓMEZ" is the most authoritative book on Venezuela ever published in English. It brings new insight into the trend of South America's history and the temperament of its people. It is a *must* for those who from business, professional, or personal interest wish to increase their knowledge of Venezuela. *This is John Lavin's first published book.*

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Our free book has bolstered the aspirations of over 500 authors. It will inspire you, guide you, help you to establish the importance of your work. *Get that free book today.* Better still, send us your manuscript and let us enter it in our Best Book Contest for 1955.

**Seth Richards, Publisher**  
**Pat Marlowe, Editor**

**PAGEANT PRESS, INC.** Dept. AJ5 130 W. 42 St. New York 36, N.Y.

# AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

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NUMBER 5

NELSON ANTRIM CRAWFORD, Editor

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# Wanted New Writers

of Stories,  
Mysteries, Articles  
for Magazines, TV, Motion Pictures

## Say Editors Themselves

If you've been reading the writers' magazines lately, you will have noticed how editors are earnestly searching for new writers. For instance, a man's mag editor says, "Besides strong first person adventure stories and articles, we are interested in science subjects, medicine and unusual experience pieces . . . \$500, \$750 and up."

A top slick editor says he is having a hard time getting 5,000 word fiction of interest to men—\$850 and up. Short shorts—\$750 base rate. A romance editor says she wants all lengths—2,500 word shorts to 10,000 word novelettes—with realism, sincerity and emotion.

An executive editor in Hollywood says, "Writers will discover in TV the finest opportunities they have ever known! . . . We need writers for westerns, comedies, mysteries. But above all, we need men and women for half-hour dramatic shows."

A "how to" editor says writers are missing a well-paying field in this market.

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## What Readers Say

### She Prefers Seed Catalogues

In reply to Violet Russell's question "What, if anything, can be done about the stereotyped magazines?" Drop them, refuse to renew your subscription.

I'd rather read Henry Field's seed catalogue than the farm journals and magazines that come to our rural mail box.

I have copies of the same farm magazines issued 12 or 15 years ago. You can relax with them. One or two do-hows, the rest for enjoyment and entertainment.

Every vehicle or implement firm puts out a magazine. The lumber yards send out do-hows. Our farm bureau furnishes ideas on better living recipes.

Don't kid yourself. We buy magazines for reading and relaxation.

HELEN KINDSVATER

Coldwater, Kan.

### A True Account? So What?

Among the students taking a short story writing course that I attended several years ago, was an elderly lady, a retired social worker, who one night had to read one of her short stories aloud to the class. The particulars of the story now elude me, but I know that they sounded implausible. In the discussion period following the reading, this criticism was directed at her story and she defended herself by saying, "It was all true. That's just the way it happened."

Apparently the lady had made use of her years as a social worker to record some of her experiences and clothe them as fiction. She could not be convinced that the mere fact certain events had occurred in actual life was not sufficient justification for their being placed in a work of fiction, and that if such events were worthy of fictional treatment, they would have to be treated in such a way as would convince the reader that such events could occur—not did, which is immaterial—but could.

This was brought to mind on reading the letter from David H. Cain in *Author & Journalist*. Mr. Cain complains, "Despite the fact that I am probably the top psychologist now writing in the entire world, a simpering female jerk of an editor once scribbled on a slip that I should write of things that I knew. The story in question was virtually a true account." I would say that the editor's comments appear valid.

The first question coming to mind when Mr. Cain states that his story was "virtually a true account" is, "So what?" Does this justify its inclusion in a short story? Incredibly coincidences, dull conversation, commonplace happenings are all a part of the average person's life. That doesn't make them story material; what *does* is the author's skill in piercing the surface, finding the meanings, making the events and characters live and breathe. That two-bit word, "verisimilitude," is one Mr. Cain perhaps has forgotten. All the facts in the world packed into one story are not going to convince the reader if the author has not done his work in shaping, selecting and interpreting these facts first.

AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

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One last thing I would like to say is that, whether or not Mr. Cain is the "top psychologist now writing in the entire world," he has certainly failed to convince me of this dubious fact. He is not an applied psychologist, for anyone with human understanding would have refrained from labeling the dissenting editor a "silly creature" and a "simpering female jerk," regardless of his feelings about the natural superiority of the male. Mr. Cain is not adept at applying the fruits of his vast erudition to the problems of the poor female editor.

GEORGE MURRAY

Ossining, N. Y.

## **He Speaks as Well as He Writes**

I was privileged to hear Mr. Charles Angoff speak in our city last night. He is not only all your magazine qualified him to be, but much more. He is a versatile and fascinating speaker whose mind is saturated with a wealth of knowledge. He has the power to convey his thoughts in a charming and down-to-earth manner. With these attributes no wonder he has gone far in his 30 years of writing and editing.

When he speaks of his characters it is with love and understanding. His speaking flows with a wealth of personality as does his writing.

When I inquired, "Do you advise writing with an outline?" he answered, "A writer should use the method best suited to him. I will not divulge my method lest it confuse you."

I also inquired if he experiences an impelling feeling he must get to the typewriter and write. As all those who have the sincere urge to write, he has experienced this over the years.

In parting, Mr. Angoff advised, "Keep writing," which to me, depicted his formula for success.

ADELAIDE J. BARON

Sioux City, Iowa

## **Max the Feline Litterateur**

The literary tomcat with whom we make our home is still running things around here with a firm paw. After his appearance in your magazine in October, 1953, he became the only known cat to belong to a writers' club. He belongs to our Greensboro Writers, with a hardbook all to himself, with his *nom d'aplomb*, Max Meowsey, on the front. The title page bills him as Max Meowsey, Concert Master, and advertises shoe shining as a specialty, caterwauling, and intimate affairs.

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AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

When asked about the latter, Max says nothing, just puts on what we call his most Maxish expression. It is very much like that worn by that English groundhog or what-is-it who has been in the public eye lately, and who is also called Max.

All I can say about Mr. Meowseley's memoirs is that if that cat ever takes pen in paw, Tobermory will be outclassed, and the authors and would-be authors in this family will never need to worry about postage again.

Incidentally, we are still having some of the best programs ever in our club, and the generosity of established writers to beginners is wonderful...

FRAN MOSELEY

Greensboro, N. C.

### Poetry from Everywhere

Thank you very much for continuing to publicize the *Citizen* verse column in your popular magazine. Have been overwhelmed by the results! Material for the column has come in from every state, and from Canada, Mexico, France, Germany, Hawaii, and England; even India.

Deep appreciation, and best wishes for the continued success of your magazine.

ESTHER WEAKLEY

Verse Editor

*The Columbus Citizen*

Columbus, Ohio

### They Each Got One

Your magazine has been helpful on many points including markets. In fact I sold three articles to three different magazines I learned about in *Author & Journalist*.

GALJA BARISH VOTAW

Media, Pa.

### Wanted: Working Writers

An old club in Youngstown, Ohio, is taking a new lease on life in this its twenty-fifth year. The Friendly Writers Club meets the last Tuesday evening in the month at the Baptist Temple. We have room for at least 20 new members . . . playwrights, poets (our Poetry Division holds Charter No. 1 from the Ohio Poetry Society), article writers, etc. . . . amateurs or professionals.

We have workshops in various fields and our programs are divided between panel discussions by members and outside speakers. Publication is not a requirement for membership, but the pink tea set is not welcome; we want to keep our organization active. And the "Friendly" in our title is not just a name—we mean it.

Prospective members are invited to drop in at a meeting or to phone RIverside 6-2715.

MARJORIE STANLEY

2160 Oak St.  
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The Jacksonville Professional Writers Group has a limited opening for new members. This group, besides carrying on the regular functions of writers' groups, has two unique projects which are proving very successful.

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MAY, 1955

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### Help to the Hospitalized

*Author & Journalist* is not only a great help in writing, but is most interesting literature.

In my work as patients' librarian at a local hospital, I find someone, occasionally, who is interested in writing poetry or short stories—to these I give any copies of *A&J* that I don't need to keep for reference, and they, too, find them helpful. We have had a few patients who have done some very good writing, and it may lead to something really paying in the future when they are able to work more steadily at it. At the present time, it acts as good mental therapy and, I think, speeds them on towards recovery.

As a result of my hospital library work, I don't find time at the present to do much writing, but occasionally get a poem out—and sometimes get one published! Mostly "for free," though. I find it a nice hobby—keeps my English, spelling, composition in trim, somewhat. Some day when I retire, I intend to speed up my writing.

The Rev. J. Shenton Lodge wrote that he had first read the journal in the early '20's—wish I could see one of those! Must be most interesting. I find the various articles in the present issues very instructive. Even though, at times, I don't agree with some points of view, that is what stirs up constructive thinking—a difference of opinion, and makes the world go round!

CRYSTAL FRIEDLY

Santa Barbara, Calif.

### An Easy-to-Read Magazine

I do like the format and the type you are now using in *Author & Journalist*. It is so easy to read and the magazine is a "must" among my subscriptions. I have been a subscriber since 1927. I say that with embarrassment since I have not been a writer for nearly that long, but of late am doing fairly well selling what I write.

Best of wishes for your continued success.

RUTH P. PATTERSON

San Francisco, Calif.

### Information for Reference

Enclosed please find my check for a year's subscription to *Author & Journalist*. I have been borrowing copies of your magazine, but find there is so much information I want to keep in my files for reference, that I prefer to have my own magazines.

ANN E. HART

Cheyenne, Wyo.

### Yes, We Plan It That Way

No need to tell you how much good I get out of *A&J*. That's the way it seems to be planned.

HELEN WATERHOUSE

Tacoma, Wash.

### A Switch in Time?

By SHIRLEY LUNDGREN

I've scorn for the author  
Who writes nothing but sex.  
(While I count my virtues  
He adds up his checks.)

AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

## New Books For Writers

In this department are reviews of important books of special interest to writers. As a service to its readers, *Author & Journalist* will supply any of these books at the published price postpaid. Send order with remittance to *Author & Journalist*, 1313 National Bank of Topeka Building, Topeka, Kansas.

How to Write for Television, edited by William I. Kaufman. Hastings House. 95 pages. \$2.50.

Mr. Kaufman and ten other noted figures in television—writers and script editors—tell from experience how to create salable material. This is not a manual of technique but rather deals with the characteristics of the effective TV play and the way to achieve them.

Much in the book is equally adapted to the stage, motion pictures, fiction: Drama doesn't come from a contrived plot but from understanding and revealing the meaning of the characters . . . Successful dialogue is "the speech that goes on inside people's heads" . . . Art can be good art . . . Don't give your public the impression you're trying to educate them . . . "Success comes from work, work, and more work."

Novel-in-the-Making, by Mary O'Hara. David McKay Company. 244 pages. \$3.

The distinguished author of *My Friend Flicka* and *Green Grass of Wyoming* tells how she wrote her more recent novel, *The Son of Adam* Wingate.

She deals with all the problems of structure, of character, of technique, just as she met them. Back of all the writing is revelation of the author's tremendous personal drive, essential to the production of an important book. A book in which any creative writer will meet many of his own problems—and will be stimulated to solve them.

Writing a Paper, by Glenn Leggett and Elinor Yaggy. The Ronald Press Company. 192 pages, paperbound. \$2.50.

Intended primarily for university students, this book offers useful help to any comparatively inexperienced writers, particularly of fact material. Especially valuable are the discussions and exercises on choosing a subject, limiting it, and fitting the treatment to the intended audience. Suggestions on choice of words and transitional sentences are also worth while.

Problems of Law in Journalism, by William F. Swindler, Ph.D. The Macmillan Company. 551 pages. \$5.75.

A comprehensive discussion of the legal aspects of freedom of the press, libel, the right of privacy, and other matters related to journalism. Of interest primarily to persons in the publishing business, but of reference value to such writers as encounter ticklish points in the use of factual material. The author is director of the school of journalism, University of Nebraska.

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The first volume in this series is scheduled for Spring release. Advertising schedules have been

prepared: full promotion by display ads in the pages of the N. Y. Times Book Review . . . N. Y. Herald Tribune . . . Saturday Review . . . plus local advertising and promotion in the area in which each author lives!

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## Let's Look At The Coverage...

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For the record, now, we're listing below some of the markets at which SMLA has placed material for its clients. Space, naturally, only permits the listing of a representative sampling, but we'll get in as many types as possible:

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**SERVICE** If your material is salable, we'll sell it to the best possible markets at best possible rates, and cover sale of additional rights throughout the world. If your material is unsalable as it stands but can be repaired, we'll give you detail-by-detail advice on how to repair it, so that you may, without additional charge, return it to us for sale. And if your material is completely unsalable, we'll tell you why, and give you specific advice on how to avoid those errors in future material. We report within two weeks.

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## Write Just What You Feel?

Why it won't work—in television or any other writing—unless you're a Galsworthy or a Noel Coward

By AL PERKINS

*Instructor, Television Writing, New York University*

THE chief thing I have noticed about beginning writers, after meeting several thousand of them in my radio-TV classes during the past 12 years, is that almost without exception they seem to think that professional playwriting is (1) easy for anyone who can write at all; (2) does not require particular training; and (3) can be done off the top of the head, with little or no preliminary research, planning, or even thinking.

I have never yet heard a patient tell a doctor he could perform an intricate gall-bladder operation as well or better than the surgeon. Most people do not even feel that they can put up wallpaper more efficiently than a paperhanger, or do a better job on the furnace pipes than a plumber.

But I have heard literally hundreds of otherwise intelligent men and women say things like "I know I can write for television because everyone says my letters are very amusing"; "I'm sure I'm cut out to be a writer—I always got good marks in English"; and "If I just wrote up some of the things that have happened to *me*, everyone would be fascinated!"

Mind you, there's nothing wrong in being able to write good letters, or to achieve high grades in composition, or to be chuck full of recollections of dramatic incidents. But these things alone will not make you a writer (at least of radio and television) until you put them through the wringer of relentless discipline and hard work.

In class the other evening, we were discussing the so-called "dramatic unities" of time, place, and action—principles laid down by Aristotle centuries ago. Aristotle would undoubtedly have made a first-rate TV writer. He believed that a story to be dramatic should have importance; that there should be something tremendous at stake (a change of destiny) for the main characters; and that a dramatic story can best be told in continuous action, all at one time and in one place, and with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

If you watch TV regularly, you'll see that its most successful writers still follow, consciously or unconsciously, these principles. They hold the number of characters down to a minimum, and use the fewest possible number of sets (for economic as well as dramatic reasons). They begin their plays with someone squarely in the middle of an engrossing situation. They stick with their main characters until these people have resolved, or failed to resolve, the dilemma in which they found themselves at the outset.

You would think that the logic of some such plan of construction would be obvious even to the novice playwright, if he or she has watched television drama at all, or studied plays in script form. Yet time after time, young writers tell me: "I'm not going to plan every move of my drama so cold-bloodedly and mechanically. I find that too restricting. I just want to write what I feel . . ."

There are, I daresay, a few professional writers who can do just that: sit down at a typewriter, put paper in it, start typing, and come up a few hours later with a producable play. Noel Coward is once reported to have written a full-length Broadway hit during a five-day ocean voyage. The late Edgar Wallace dictated his mystery stories as fast as he could talk. Even John Galsworthy claimed he went to his writing-table each morning without a thought in his head and started putting down whatever came into his mind. Certainly that sounds like a fascinating (and easy!) method of working.

Unfortunately most of us are not Galsworthys or Cowards or even Wallaces. Most of us have heaven's own tough time thinking of anything sufficiently important to write about in the first place. Then we beat our heads against the wall trying to shape the initial situation into a workable plot. And then we face the still formidable task of putting it all down in dialogue and movement, in a script that will compel a buyer's attention where

a score of competing scripts have failed to do so.

Make no mistake, this is grueling, intensive work of the most exacting and unrewarding kind. I don't blame any writer for preferring not to put himself through such an ordeal. If he can just write what he "feels"—and then sell it—he has my profound envy and admiration. But I don't know a professional in television who can turn out marketable scripts on any such basis, much as he would like to do so.

If TV writing were easy, everyone could do it, and scripts therefore would have little or no cash value. I think it was Robert (*Tea and Sympathy*) Anderson who told my class, when Tennessee Williams had just sold one of his plays to the movies for something like a quarter of a million dollars: "If it's so easy to write plays, why do the movies pay so much money for them?"

Self-discipline is one of the first things the aspiring TV playwright must master, and it is one of the hardest things for him to learn. Self-discipline means that the moment you get an idea for a play, you must immediately subject it to the harshest criticism you can direct against it. Most of us, when we get an idea, have a tendency to feel that it *must* be good, simply because it's ours. You can't assume this in television writing (or in much other professional writing, for that matter).

Let's say you get this idea for a television play: A young girl drives into a filling station. She falls into conversation with the attendant, and tells him she's a Broadway stage star going home for a vacation. But as he questions her, he learns that she's actually a failure, sneaking home when she couldn't make the grade.

Well, how does it sound? Tops? Fair? Mediocre? On careful analysis, I think you'll say (even if this idea is your own) that it's not particularly promising. Most of the important action has taken place in the past, leaving only reminiscent talk, which is not dramatic. And where can this opening situation lead? Either to the girl's falling in love with the young man and giving up her stage ambitions, or to her return to Broadway and ultimate success—both of which seem somewhat contrived.

If you find yourself wrestling with inconclusive characters and a fairly weak plot, the best thing to do, usually, is drop it entirely and start something more promising. As noted, to give up your own brain-child (and thereby admit your own failure)

requires tremendous self-discipline. But in the long run it's worth the effort, as you will find out.

Next time, you may come up with something that holds out more hope of turning into a TV play. For instance, suppose you hit on this idea: A husband goes through a tremendous emotional experience when his wife is suddenly charged with murder. See the difference? Here's a situation that doesn't require a lot of explanation about things that happened a long time ago. You can open with your main characters, show in a few seconds what kind of people they are, how they live, how devoted they are to each other and then—Bang! In come the police and arrest the wife!

Now you've got a situation that can go somewhere. Is it important? You bet it is: a woman's life and a husband's happiness are at stake. Is it full of emotion? Put yourself in either the wife's or the husband's shoes, and you'll say it most certainly is. Does it have a beginning, a middle, and an end? Obviously, yes: it *must* build to a climax; the woman must be found guilty or innocent; the husband's faith in her must prove justified or unjustified.

And there are all sorts of opportunities for surprise twists along the way. For instance, being the kind of people they are, the husband and wife would insist on a lie-detector test. This is *sure* to prove her innocent (and to provide you with a highly dramatic incident to write!). But does it prove her innocent? Probably not. It proves she's lying . . . about something . . . and this quickens the husband's determination to find out why she's lying, and about what. So this faith in her can begin to waver (which will make our interest in the play deepen) until the suspense is ended and the conflict resolved one way or the other at the end.

So *please*, if you seriously intend to write for television, I urge you *not* to think of it as an *easy* way to make a living. Don't think you can jump right into it; you'll have to train yourself first, by writing one rejected play after another, but learning something from each one you write (and from each one you watch on the screen). Then you must teach yourself to examine every character, every speech, every motive, with the utmost care. If you have the slightest suspicion that there's anything even slightly false about anything they do or say, throw them out and start over. You will save yourself countless headaches if you do this ruthlessly at the beginning of your labors . . . rather than after submitting a completed script which someone else throws out.

## Don't Spread the Icing Too Thick

During the last war, 15,000,000 American men put on uniforms and fought a war all over the face of the globe. They came back more confident of themselves, but they also brought back a demand for more realism and less hokum. They know what it means to witness cowardice. They don't need to have either of these traits enlarged or overstressed. They became accustomed to seeing a very dramatic side of life in everyday terms. They lived the life depicted in many stories.

Therefore, they are in a position to know when the author is spreading the icing too thick on the cake. The American reading public has learned to demand a better grade of story, based upon stronger values and more solid motivations. More work and care must go into the preparation of a story and the actual writing itself must be more skillful.—Harry Steeger, President of Popular Publications, in the *Roundup* (Western Writers of America).

# Your Key to Vital Characters

By LLOYD ERIC REEVE

**C**HARACTERIZATION, of course, extends beyond the depiction of people. Animal characters are legion, some of the more classic being Black Beauty, Esther Birdsall Darling's Baldy of Nome, Will James' Smoky the cowhorse, Bambi of Felix Salten, and not to be omitted certainly is the little bull whose name was Ferdinand!

Human personification of imaginary creatures, and even of inanimate objects, serves to populate further this timeless fictional universe, and is achieved of course wholly by means of the techniques of characterization. Harvey, the invisible rabbit, becomes more real eventually than any visible character in the cast, and dramatizes an aspect of the hero's unconscious which could not otherwise have been depicted nearly so dramatically. In *Hamlet* a ghost becomes basic motivation for an entire tragedy. And the storm heroine of George Stewart's *The Storm* is even given a name, Maria, and achieves an ultimate personality more impressive than any of the actual people of the novel.

The devices of characterization are both numerous and obvious, though perhaps by that very fact often slighted in part or degree with resultingly weakened character effects. Technically we depict character by means of description, action, dialogue, and emotionalized introspection. That is, by how the person looks, inside and out, what he does, says, and what and how he thinks and feels. In short how—as each plot specially dictates—he reacts characteristically to life, which is just to say, of course, that we simply show him *living*.

Don't tell about him. Just let him demonstrate himself in action, by bringing him alive.

And still it isn't enough, not even all this. We must go even further, if we are to achieve the fully dimensional portraiture, must dramatize not only how *he reveals* himself in all these ways, but also by the way all other characters in the story are influenced by him, react to him; what *they* variously say, think, feel about him; how they act in psychological response to his character effect upon them.

All of which means that characterization in any one story is interdependent. Depiction of any one character is intrinsically dependent upon the depiction of all the others. It is further dependent upon all the other elements of dramatic composition, within the particular story's plot, its atmosphere, situation, theme, and so on.

As somewhat a case in point I recall the long struggle Mildred Masterson McNeilly had with her first novel, *Heaven is Too High*. Her original intention had been to write a biography of Baranov, the first Russian Governor General of Alaska, but as the work progressed she decided to make it a novel instead with Baranov as her hero, and as a result ran into immediate trouble. An impressive character, his life still didn't fall into any sort of dramatic sequence that could be fashioned into a plot without drastic violation of historical fact.

To change Baranov into an imaginary character, on the other hand, under an invented name, would have weakened seriously the historical appeal of the book. Her ultimate, and highly successful, solution was to invent two imaginary characters, a hero

and a heroine, to carry the plot, and to change Baranov's primary function in the story from character to background; that is, to provide authentic historical atmosphere.

Thus the character was made to contribute and emphasize local color and mood. Local color, in turn, is so often used to intensify the character impressions, through the costume, speech, thought, work, customs, and attitudes of indigenously different kinds of people, through their various "ways of life."

In actual practice, of course, it is not nearly as easy as this discussion would make it seem, and certainly not as mechanical. To reiterate—and it can't be reiterated too often—we must as writers identify ourselves in our characters, know them so well that we actually become them while writing the story, and constantly react in a convincing, vivid, and always *in-character* way to the story's special *milieu* and plot.

A great many writers—including Lenore Glen Offord, author of *Cloth of Silver* and *Skeleton Key* among numerous other novels of suspense—even compose long dramatized sketches of their characters before ever writing a word in the story proper. This kind of narrative warm-up invariably brings our characters and their whole illusion more convincingly alive even before actual plot execution is begun, and, once the actual writing is started, accelerates a more immediately smooth flow of composition.

## EXERCISES IN CHARACTER DRAWING

Here are a number of exercises by which we can improve our facility in characterization:

*Analyze characterization in published stories for its relationship to the story's plot—and analyze plots for their relationship to the characters. Try to see how the characters help to determine the plot, and how the plot, in turn, influences the characterization.*

*Select or develop characters, and then evolve a plot to dramatize them. Devise plots, and invent characters to bring out these plots, and then recall actual people you know, and change, shape, develop them to fit functionally into the plot you've designed.*

*Start with either character or plot—and then keep adjusting and changing both plot and character, until you have worked out the most effective story possible.*

*As an exercise simply copy passages of characterization—action, dialogue, emotionalized introspection—from various published stories, contemporary and classic, and thus develop your instinctive facility for effective characterization.*

Often we are told that our characters must be given a single dominant "trait." This is another of those oversimplified technical maxims, true

enough in theory, but deceptive in its facile suggestion. When too literally followed, it results more nearly in caricature than character, in symbolical effigies of hate, fear, generosity, greed, or some other nakedly elemental emotion, in the character that is all black or all white, rather than the good grey mixture that is most of us.

We—which is to say humanity—have a little bit of everything in us. None of us are wholly without greed or wholly selfish. In even the tenderness we feel there is a hint of sadism. All of us experience to some degree at least every human emotion and shade of emotion conceivable. Thus the character of each of us is determined by a particular combination of all human traits.

In no two people can the combination be exactly alike. And it is this special combination—and synthesis—of basic human emotions, of all conceivable emotions, which distinguishes the individual's psychic composition, his exact personality, his individuality. That unique combination and shading, rather than any single emotion, determine the dominant "trait" or nature of each of us. The dominant trait is not any single and stereotyped emotion, but rather in each individual a personal and unique combination of all emotions.

The same rationalizations apply to characterization in fiction, to the characters of our stories who can never be more, nor less, than human beings. The "dominant trait" of each is evolved simply as a unique and special combination of all emotions. This makes each new character a little different from any other who ever has been or ever will be depicted, makes him into a convincing individual.

#### NAMING YOUR CHARACTERS

At least a word on naming our characters would seem apropos to this discussion. Always present, of course, is the temptation to suggest character and background too obviously in the naming. At its subtle best is character naming in Ebenezer Scrooge, Oliver Twist, Elmer Gantry, George Bab- bitt. But to call a villain Lew Satan or a heroine Glory Love—and greater exaggerations regularly find their way into print—is going to lengths too obviously contrived, which not only invalidate the reality of the characters themselves but of the whole illusion in which they are depicted.

Fictional names have always nourished language itself, occasionally developing widely expanded meanings—Babbittry, Gargantuan, a Scrooge, a malapropism, a Pollyanna—and in many instances legitimatized by eventual dictionary inclusion.

Often in naming characters we can be unwittingly trapped by the hypnotic appeal of alliteration into using names which look alike to the eye, such as Jed, Job, Joe, Jon, Jim, Jud, Jake, Jack, Jude, John, Jess, James, Jacob, Jared, Jasper, Jason, and Joan, Jean, Jane, June, Janice, Janet, Jenny, Julia, Judith, and the many more names for either sex which closely resemble each other in appearance.

Such incestuous character christening can become progressively confusing to the reader. At the start of the story he will invariably be confused as to which is which, Job or Joe, Joan or Jane, and ascribe initially characteristics to one that belong to another, and even of physical appearance. He may visualize brunette Joan, for example, as having the flaxen hair that really belongs to Jane, but giving even-tempered Jane the impulsive petulance that motivates Joan's later loss of the hero, Joe—

or was it Jed?—and anyway what did he see in that sulky Joan, and now even I am hopelessly mixed up trying to give the illustration.

I remember how William Byron Mowery, novelist, short story writer, teacher, and author of *Professional Short Story Writing*, used to say that to differentiate between character names to the reading eye even the number of syllables in each name should be varied. That is if one character had a one-syllable first name, and a two or more syllable last name, then another should be given a two-syllable first name and a one-syllable last, and so on, varying the syllable combinations throughout the cast.

Still another pitfall in character naming is in giving names that suggest through similarity the names of highly publicized people of stage, screen, television, radio, in sports, politics, or otherwise in the limelight, as well as names that suggest widely known characters of fiction or folklore. When a name is associated this way with a widely known personality, either actual or fictional, the reader unconsciously visualizes the same sort of person when reading the name in our story, quite regardless of how we may have intended the characterization. Later characterization would then seem out of character with the reader's initial impression, with the image flashed upon first seeing the character name.

Thus to name a character in a story Joe Dimeglio would result in the average reader seeing a person in appearance and character similar to a baseball celebrity, probably associated with a glamorous film star—even if the story character was a priest, say, or a bespectacled little teacher in a girls' seminary. Similarly any character named Paul Banyan would tend to impress the reader as a huge man (Paul Bunyan) given to tall tales, even though in the story he was supposed to be a timid little squirt, scared of his own shadow.

But when all is said and done perhaps the best way of all to characterize is simply not to! To forget the devices and let there be life.

"It is not necessary," as an anonymous writer once put it, "to say that a woman is a snarling and grumpy person. Bring in the old lady and let her snarl."

The true fiction writer never says that an old man is a miser. Rather he shows him counting his pennies, trickling them lingeringly into a pile, tasting them with his shrunken fingers, eyes a little avid, nostrils twitching to the green copperish smell. He might even show him ostentatiously dropping a slug into a blind beggar's cup.

"His very throat was moral." Thus Dickens begins his classic depiction of the "moral Pecksniff." And Dorothy Paarker's "Big Blonde" was "a large fair woman of the type that incites some men when they use the word 'blonde' to click their tongues and wag their heads roguishly," while her young man in "Dusk Before Fireworks" had a voice which "was intimate as the rustle of sheets."

However it's done, whatever the techniques, whatever the psychology, whatever the magic, the end product remains the same—simply characters who come alive, who turn into people, who live and breathe, who laugh and weep, who love and hate—characters who, as Samuel W. Taylor has put it, get up and walk.

*This is the second of two articles by Mr. Reeve on characterization in fiction. The first appeared in the April Author & Journalist.*

## What Boys and Girls Respond To

By LOIS EBY

**A**FTER years of pounding away at practically every form of adult writing—adventure serials, movie scripts, radio scripts, mystery novels, I approach the juvenile field with almost a guilty delight.

Like a motion picture actor sneaking back to the stage for that live applause, I have indulged myself in short intervals of writing for young people because of their *response*.

By response, I don't mean fan mail or personal comment. I mean the potential reader's habit of poking his head between writer and script. The old query seems to carry over. "Is there a sound when it's not being heard?" Is there a story when it's not being read?

For the adult field, you struggle to build a tense thriller to keep the reader from falling asleep in his chair and his pipe from burning down the house.

Not so in the juvenile. Here your problem is simply to concoct a logical action story. Your reader's quivering tentacles of interest will close around those characters if they have any life at all, and make each step in the solving of their problem a thing of breathless suspense.

I was exposed directly to this response during a couple of summers when I earned part of my next semester's tuition telling stories to large groups of children. Watching a hundred juveniles forget to breathe during the "scary" parts . . . seeing their bodies leap in relaxing reflex when the danger is resolved, is a heady thing. And sensing a rising, communal case of fidgets when an overlong passage of exposition begins to cut the story flow, is an education in timing hard to duplicate.

Juvenile response, of course, changes radically with every stage of the individual's development. The publisher's divisions into age groups are structurally sound. The middle group of juveniles (roughly ages 8-12) would not be caught dead reading a "baby book." And don't expect them to greet your story's dénouement with a younger child's unabashed amazement. They have so recently moved out of the world of *firsts* into the world of *repetitions*. "Aw, that's old stuff!" from them is no cry of boredom, but the triumph of recognition.

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*Lois Eby, who writes also under the pen name of Patrick Lawson, worked for a number of years in motion pictures, doing scripts for The Lone Ranger and other juvenile serials. She is a highly successful writer of mystery stories. The picture, Larceny, based on her novel The Golden Fleece, was the third biggest grosser of the year 1950. Since winning the Boys' Life-Dodd, Mead Award for Star-Crossed Stallion, her first novel for young people, she has devoted much attention to juvenile fiction.*

Don't quail before this phase of response. Take advantage of it. Be sure your story is replete with situations and reactions which this age has recently learned to identify as the typical and the true, and they'll be with you to the last line.

The upper group (ages 12-16), busily lifting their sights from adjustments in immediate environment to the larger adventure of establishing themselves as world citizens, are moving steadily toward adult response. In fact, certain portions definitely overlap in some respects.

But this teen-ager still shares the one vital juvenile attribute. He is still on the alert for answers. Answers to how he can successfully fit into an adult social pattern. Answers to the brand new set of feelings and emotions he feels stirring within himself.

Give him even a hint of such an answer, and watch his protective veneer of sophistication crack. He'll be offhand, even wary, in his acceptance, but you'll be practically reduced to cinders by his inability.

The prime variant between adult and juvenile writing is probably action. The Czech Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, once observed that children did not think with their minds, but with their muscles and their blood. This is so true. A junior Nero Woolf, who sat and ruminated over his problems, would drive a juvenile reader mad. Clues—or truths—must be discovered in action.

This does not mean your story should move at a dead run, without pace or rhythm. The young reader especially needs passages of quiet humor or information between the exhausting peaks of tension. He must have time to do a little psychic panting before he leaps into the next absorption effort.

Ah—and speaking of information. Here is a facet of juvenile writing which will delight you if you have a speck of dialectic in you.

Most adult fiction, whether romance, adventure, or mystery, contains some kernel of interesting information. To find this information, the writer has probably spent considerable time. But let him dare lead down the story with facts just because they are slightly terrific! The adult reader doesn't like it. He wants to read fact books for his facts. He doesn't want facts cluttering things up when he sits back to be entertained.

Not so the juvenile. Facts, unless dragged in dead by the tail, are absorbed with the same gusto as the fiction. The novelty of facts still classifies them as entertainment.

Herein lies a grave responsibility, which your editor will certainly point out to you if you slip up. You must never betray a juvenile's trusting acceptance by inaccuracies, either in fact or in fiction. You must never let a character's biased statements or personal prejudices slip by without careful rebuttal, lest they be taken for truths. Where the adult will say, "What a character!" or "That's

one man's opinion"—the juvenile, lacking such basis for discrimination, will say, "So that's how it is."

This total trust will shatter completely once he is given reason to suspect the authenticity of your statements. He is highly sensitive about his lack of knowledge. This makes him—parents, teachers, and editors will back me up in this, I think—the most critical audience in the world, and the most outspoken.

An adult will usually be indulgent over a writer's error; a juvenile, never. He will take the thing personally. The writer was an adult, therefore he must know. He was saying it to fool the reader. The unforgivable sin.

As for your plot. You can't make this too complicated or you won't have time for the buildup of description and reaction the juvenile demands.

I mean you can't just mention that your character has a dog. That kind of fatal carelessness would call for pistols at dawn. No—he must know the size, shape, breed, and disposition of this dog, until he can see him, hear him bark, feel the texture of his coat as he pets him. (Before you finish a juvenile book, your own focus on physical phenomena will be sharper, too.)

And you must take time to analyze and explain any emotional reaction in the story that may prove to be beyond the reader's experience. He will resent a character he does not comprehend.

But don't let this suggestion of simplicity in plot construction mislead you into thinking you can get away with a slipshod deal. If you don't believe the juvenile can follow plot line, try telling stories to an 8-year-old.

In the first five minutes of a bedtime story once, I introduced a cross-eyed calf—and then forgot him. An hour or so later, when the last dizzy evolvement had been cleared up, the 8-year-old brought up the subject of the calf, and proceeded blithely to escort him through every one of the complicated plot entanglements, to his rightful place in the dénouement.

The alert concentration of a juvenile is a formidable thing. He will squirm at a plot incongruity, rapidly lose interest if the haphazard sequence continues.

Finally, that much-discussed attitude of the juvenile writer toward his reader. Personally, I boil at the pro and con arguments over "writing down" to juveniles. At the end, the juvenile usually comes out sounding like some rare species of genus homo only distantly related to the human race.

The juveniles I have met are not like that. They are people. Some of them are some of the reallest people I know. They find themselves in a strange world—as aren't we all? They struggle to make their adjustments—as don't we all? They are faced with problems—which they solve or run away from, as don't we all? And they like to read of characters several years older than they are because they are eagerly anticipating the next stage of their development . . . fortunate people.

Writing for juveniles would be dull going indeed, if *juvenile* meant *infantile*. But any psychiatrist will tell you infantilism has nothing to do with age. There are plenty of infants over 50.

If you go on a trip and come back to tell your neighbor about it, you don't "talk down" to him, even though your accumulation of knowledge is now greater than his. You share it with him.

This, to me, is more the attitude to take toward your juvenile reader—and the only reason the juvenile should deign to accept an adult-written story instead of writing his own.

The adult has been of a few more excursions into this crazy, mixed-up enigma called Life. He's had a few more tilts with beguiling windmills. Maybe he has picked up some answers. Maybe he has gained some strengths. He may be able to point out some short cuts along the road of the juvenile's understanding and enjoyment.

Certainly the juvenile returns this last favor in full measure to the juvenile writer.

## There's Money in Questions

By J. R. CLAWSON

QUESTIONS at the wrong time or place can lead to a pop in the nose. But questions asked the right way, may mean cash in your mail box.

The information quiz is popular filler material for all sorts of magazines and newspapers. Quiz material is easy to prepare—for either a writer or a photographer. Rates, like everything else in the magazine field, range from low to very substantial. Yet, strange to say, most freelancers overlook this profitable phase of their business.

Generally speaking, quizzes sell better when they are grouped around a single theme: "Quiz of the Color Red," "Who Was This President?" etc.

The form used in the first mentioned was merely to ask a question, and let the reader supply the answer. This form is least popular of all with the editors, and should be used only on special occasions. Typical of the questions about men who were nicknamed "Red" were these:

1. Football's famous Galloping Ghost . . . . .
2. The cowboy whose name is title of a comic strip . . . . .
3. A famous sports announcer in radio . . . . .

Answers in a separate box gave those as Red Grange, Red Ryder, and Red Barber.

The Game of Presidents (which was published in *Boys Today*) followed the matching form.

For matching, the reader is given two columns. The first column is a list in numerical order. The second column is a jumbled list, which has an answer to fit the first row. From my "Tools for the Job," and using three sets instead of twenty, the quiz would look like this:

1. Surveyor	(a) Line gauge
2. Printer	(b) Pestle
3. Pharmacist	(c) Transit

The correct answers when properly matched are 1-c; 2-a; 3-b.

Far and away the best-liked quiz in editorial rooms is the multiple choice question, with only one answer being correct. It is a mistake, incidentally, to make questions too difficult. After all, the quiz is primarily designed to please the reader—not to give him an inferiority complex. The average reader likes to finish a quiz with the thought:

*Well, I got most of them right—look how smart I am!*

The secret to successful quiz work, like making a good stew, is to get the mixture just right—one or two very difficult questions so that it doesn't appear too easy, a few medium-hard questions which can be solved with thought, and some extremely simple questions to help build the reader's score. Even the most intelligent of us can't be expert in all fields, and it is unfair to stack all questions that only an expert can answer!

To illustrate the multiple-choice, simple-difficult, type question, let's consider one of the many pictures I have placed with *Look* for its Photoquiz.

The picture shows a girl wearing a leotard, sailing through the air in a stag leap. Now had the photo been slanted toward *Dance Magazine* (where all readers are familiar with dance movements) the question might have been:

1—The proper name for a "stag leap" is:

- (a) arabesque
- (b) attitudes
- (c) forte
- (d) grand jeté

Any student of the dance should know a stag leap is really a grande jeté, but since *Look*'s market is slanted toward general readership, the question was put:

1—This flying lassie is a student of:

- (a) metaphysics
- (b) modern dance
- (c) meteorology
- (d) Dutch windmills

This particular photo is yet to be published, so there may be an editorial change in the possible answers. It is likely, however, that it will go through in this form. By reasoning, the reader can eliminate both (a) and (c). The last possible answer is utterly ridiculous, so (b) must be correct—even if the reader doesn't know a stag leap is part of modern dance.

When I switched from freelance writing to freelance magazine photography, I carried the quiz sideline with me. As a photographer, I find quiz work provides my best source of revenue.

Most magazines pay \$5, \$10, or \$15 per shot for black and whites. Sometimes quiz pictures sell as low as \$3 each, but I have also sold black and white quiz photos for \$75 a shot. Photographers like to work for big sets, and a quiz provides a quick outlet for 12-24 stock pictures grouped about various subjects.

Specialized subjects can be quickly grouped. I take a lot of insect and nature photos. A general run of nature questions would be titled, "Test Your Nature Knowledge." A group of webs, nests, etc. might be, "Who Lives in This House?" Still another may be insect pictures only under the name, "Friend, Neutral, or Foe?"

I also specialize in pictures of pioneer workaday antiques—like candle molds, grease lamps, horse-tail sacks, and crude tools and machinery of the last century. Markets are many and varied, including the Pioneer Instinct feature of the *Saturday Evening Post*, complete sets called "Your American Heritage" in *Ford Times*, other groups to Methodist Publishing House, and general antiques to *Look*. So the quiz field is as wide as any other field.

## 12th SOUTHWEST WRITERS CONFERENCE

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## NORTHEAST WRITERS' CONFERENCE

June 23-25, Cleveland, Ohio

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## FROM EDITORS' DESKS TO YOU

After a long period in which all material was arranged for by the editors, *Family Circle*, 25 W. 45th St., New York 36, now welcomes freelance articles and stories suited to its audience.

Articles cover the fields customarily dealt with in the home service magazines—gardening, food, building, home furnishing, children, and general family interests. Good photographs are an asset.

Fiction carries predominantly feminine appeal but should not be formula stuff.

Payment for accepted material is at varying but always very good rates. The new editor is Robert M. Jones.

*Family Circle* is a monthly sold at 5c a copy in chain grocery stores. Its circulation is well above 4,000,000.

— A&J —

Writers who want to break into the comedy field may find it worth while to get into touch with Comedy Workshop, 8221 S. Throop St., Chicago 20. It is currently supplying material to night club comics and civic and fraternal organizations. In most cases there is no fee but name credit is given.

Writers who submit material should state whether they are willing to have it rewritten if necessary, with co-credit to the rewriter.

The workshop is also planning a publication containing comic material—especially that aimed at radio, television, or the stage. It will not pay for accepted material but will bring it to the attention of performers who buy.

J. Quinlan, Jr., is director of Comedy Workshop.

— A&J —

Huckleberry Mountain Workshop Camp, Hendersonville, N. C., has announced a course in photographic illustrating for news, feature articles, and picture stories, July 1-4. It is open to news reporters, feature writers, and editors of business and industrial journals. Chester Smith will direct the course.

— A&J —

Ray Robinson is the new editor of *Real*, non-fiction magazine for men, 10 E. 50th St., New York 16. The magazine is interested in adventure, men's dramatic experience, science, medicine, sport, exposés. Payment is \$200 up per article on acceptance. Query before sending in MSS.

— A&J —

The *Home Worker Magazine*, 20 E. Delaware Place, Chicago 11, is interested in articles of 500-1,000 words on hobbies and homecrafts useful for self-improvement and income. At present the magazine offers advertising space in exchange for accepted MSS. Robert Tunnell is the editor.

— A&J —

*Variegation* and *Recurrence*, the two poetry magazines long edited by Grover Jacoby, have increased their rate to 30c a line up, on acceptance. Both publications are quarterlies, the former devoted to free verse, the latter to rhymed verse. They have published much important poetry, and newspapers reprint from them often, the *New York Herald Tribune* alone having republished 60 poems. The address of both magazines is Room 540, 124 W. Fourth St., Los Angeles 13, Calif.

AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

*Town Journal*, 1111 E. St., Washington 4, D. C., is a good market for first-class cartoons appealing to people in small communities. Roughs rather than finished jobs should be submitted. Payment is \$40 a cartoon on acceptance of the completed drawing. Address Howard J. LaFay, who also considers roughs for *Farm Journal*.

—A&J—

Carlton Brown has become editor of *See*, 10 E. 40th St., New York 16. This magazine uses articles, often controversial, on significant national and international topics; also outstanding pictorial features. Popular treatment is required. Payment is \$150 up for pictorial features, \$300 up for full-length (around 3,000 words) articles.

—A&J—

*Small Types Magazine*, 26 Austin Crescent, Toronto, Ont., Canada, is a juvenile publication in the market for varied material—short stories 800-1,000 words, serials to 2,500, fillers to 200, how-to-make features, and a very little verse. Photographs of special juvenile interest are also used. *Small Types* pays on publication—rate not announced.

—A&J—

*The Marketeer*, a bimonthly published at 1417½ Virgil Place, Hollywood 27, Calif., is buying a very few stories of 750-1,500 words, for which it pays 1c a word on acceptance. It is particularly interested in stories that almost made the major magazines, and each published story will be accompanied by a note giving the editor's opinion why the piece didn't sell to a top publication. Richard L. Sargent is editor.

—A&J—

*Folder*, 1459 Third Ave., New York 28, is a little magazine interested in serious fiction, important poetry (including translations of contemporary foreign poets), and original silk screen prints. The magazine is produced in portfolio form with attractive format and printing. No payment is made for contributions. Daisy Aldan and Richard Miller are the editors.

—A&J—

*The American Legion Magazine*, 720 Fifth Ave., New York 19, has found its request for "anecdotes of general Americana" confusing to some writers. It does not want historical or pioneer folklore, but "general, everyday type American humor." The magazine pays \$20 each for acceptable anecdotes. Payment is on acceptance.

—A&J—

Zondervan Publishing House, 1415 Lake Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich., is in the market for programs for junior church; religious readings 3-15 minutes in length; programs for worship services; programs for church social gatherings of adults and of young people; programs for children's worship. All material must have "a definite evangelical slant."

While these are announced as contests, no prizes are indicated—merely payment of 1½c a word on publication. Manuscripts are received up to October 31. None will be returned. If the writer does not hear within 90 days after this date, he may assume his material has been rejected. Complete information is obtainable from Zondervan Publishing House.

The offer will appeal only to writers who do not mind having their material tied up for months on the chance of a small payment later.

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Tomorrow's Features, Leonardtown, Md., has been organized to supply quality material to weeklies and small dailies. It is open to submissions of ideas and completed material—including cartoons and comic strips.

The head of this syndicate of W. Lowrie Kay, former chief of the central news bureau of the *Christian Science Monitor* and also former state editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

— AJ —

*Baptist Program*, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn., is interested in articles on ministerial problems. It makes no payment for MSS. Albert McClellan is editor.

— AJ —

Barbara Hoefeld has become editor of *Pacific Printer, Publisher, and Lithographer*, Pier 7, San Francisco 11, Calif., an important magazine of the graphic arts industry. It uses news and articles in its field, for which it pays 5c a word on acceptance. Queries on articles are essential.

— AJ —

Associated Authors, P. O. Box 274, Cooper Station, New York 3, is undertaking the publication of a limited number of non-conformist books of economic and sociological interest.

The first volume to appear is *Labor: Free and Slave*, by Dr. Bernard Mandel. Other books planned are an American novel dealing with a union organizer and a translation of a novel set against the background of the Austrian "New Deal."

The organization has heretofore operated by means of private inquiry among non-conformist authors but is now willing to consider freelance

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book manuscripts that fit its specific aims. Under no circumstances, however, should MSS. be submitted without previous inquiry as to their possible suitability.

Inquiries should be addressed to Henry Kraus.

— *A&J* —

*Illiterati* is a little magazine of varied contents edited and printed (in several colors) by William R. Eshelman and Kemper Nomland, Jr., at 711 S. San Rafael Ave., Pasadena 2, Calif.

The magazine is definitely modern, interested in the experimental not only in verse and the short story but photographs, drawings, paintings, musical settings of poems, and songs.

There is no definite publication schedule, the magazine appearing as sufficient material is collected. No payment is made for contributions.

— *A&J* —

The *Secretary*, official publication of National Secretaries Association, 1 Gateway Center, Pittsburgh 22, Pa., has changed its policy so that it no longer pays for accepted manuscripts. It formerly offered 1c a word. Dale J. Claypool is managing editor.

## Additional Conferences

Information on the following writers' conferences has been received since the listing in the April *Author & Journalist*:

**San Francisco State College Writers' Conference**, San Francisco, Calif. Founded 1955. June 25-August 5. Subjects: novel, short story, poetry. Faculty: Mark Harris, Norman Macleod, Walter Van Tilburg Clark. University credit. Address Writers' Conference, San Francisco State College, 19th Ave. at Holloway, San Francisco, Calif.

**Writers' Conference, Southern Baptist Assembly**, Ridgecrest, N. C. Founded 1931. June 30-July 6. Subjects: fiction, magazine article writing, juvenile writing, reporting, religious publicity, playwriting. Clifton J. Allen, Director. Fee, \$2. Expected enrollment, 125. Address Clifton J. Allen, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville 3, Tenn.

**Writers' Conference, Southern Baptist Assembly**, Glorieta, N. M. Founded 1953. August 25-31. Subjects: magazine article writing, fiction, juvenile writing, reporting, religious publicity, playwriting. Clifton J. Allen, director. Fee, \$2. Expected enrollment, 75. Address Clifton J. Allen, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville 3, Tenn.



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## Suggestions on Comic Scripting

THE most vexing problem in writing for the comic books, and one that most professionals battle with each time they do a script, concerns the page limitations set up for a particular story. Suppose we set up such a problem so I can show you my way of trying to solve it.

You have *visualized* your story, in panel form, and perhaps made a rough outline of the story line. It seems to run about eight pages of panels, or boxes. Next, you type a concise synopsis of the eight-page story and send it in to the editor. He likes the idea fine—but he wants it done in six pages, not eight. Or he tells you to do the script in eight pages (which you turn out as fast as you can) and then he finds his book cramped for space and he wants the story cut to six pages. Or, by the same token, he might want you to expand a six-page story to eight pages. This would mean more money—but the problem of making the story *fit* the specific number of paneled pages remains to be solved.

Your comic book story has three parts: the opening, the body, and the dénouement. Of these, you have probably spent more time thinking about, and working on, the opening and the dénouement. You know you have to catch the attention of your readers (the editor) with a good story beginning and you have to be sure all loose ends of your plot are tied up neatly with a good ending.

If you try rewriting the opening, either to shorten or lengthen the number of pages, it is usually necessary to make changes all through the body to the ending. And if you rework the ending of the story it is usually necessary to make changes through the body to the beginning. It is apparent that if you could find a way to leave the beginning and ending just as they are, then you would be saving yourself a lot of revision work.

Your story will be divided into a number of scenes. We have decided to leave the opening scene, or beginning, and the closing scene, or ending, just as they are in your story outline or script. But in between these two scenes you will have two, three, or more connecting scenes—which make up the body of the story. You should study these carefully and try to select the one that is best to lengthen or shorten, whichever purpose you are trying to accomplish.

---

*Earle C. Bergman is not only a writer for the comic books but an authority on them. He has contributed frequent articles to Author & Journalist and is author of The Fundamentals of Comic Script Writing. His own work for the comics is largely in the animated animal type such as Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig. An innovation of his is the adaptation of movie cartoons to the comic books. Mr. Bergman lives in California.*

Each of your in-between scenes furthers the plot and moves the story toward its climax and end. *What* each accomplishes becomes the *purpose* for that scene. If you change this in any way, the chances are good that you will also have to make other revisions in the rest of the story to make it flow smoothly from scene to scene. In cutting or lengthening a scene, focus your attention on *how* the purpose of the scene was accomplished.

We can use one of my stories and work with it as an example. Elmer Fudd has a job at a sideshow in a carnival and Bugs Bunny tries to get free tickets, free rides, etc. The trouble that Bugs causes in each scene moves Elmer closer and closer to being fired. *Elmer's demotions* in jobs with the carnival, in the middle scenes of the story, become the *purposes* of those scenes. I wanted Elmer to be working as the attendant at a baseball-throwing concession in one of my middle scenes. And I wanted Bugs to do something with the prizes (kewpie dolls and walking canes) which would get Elmer into more trouble with his boss.

Bugs talks Elmer into letting him throw free baseballs as a come-on to draw customers. Bugs starts winning dolls; gets carried away with his pitching ability; refuses to let any customers interrupt his winning streak; and finally wins all the kewpie dolls and runs off with them. He tries to return them later, because he is not a black villain, but they are broken accidentally.) The loss of the dolls, and not taking in any money, bring another demotion from his boss. *How* this purpose was accomplished took up two and a half pages of panels in my original script, which was an eight-page story.

Now suppose my editor wanted the same story in six pages. I would have Bugs come up to Elmer's stand, see the prizes, and ask Elmer for a free cane. Elmer would refuse. Bugs would grab one of the canes and dash around the corner of the concession tent with: "You can spare one, Doc!" But the cane hooks on to one of the guy wires holding up the tent concession, it collapses, and all the kewpie dolls are broken. This could be done in two single-panels and one double-panel—which would be a total of one-half page in the script. In this version, the purpose of the scene remains the same as in the original but *how* that purpose was accomplished now makes the script two pages shorter.

The page limitations of a comic book story bring a similar problem to the semipro and the beginning writer in this field. He sends in a story synopsis and the editor O.K.'s it for a six-page story—which is the length the writer thought it would cover. If he does not have a story outline (which he should have had before writing the synopsis) he writes one now. He then starts at the beginning of his story outline, putting it into a rough draft script format, and works toward the

end of his allowable six pages. But our writer does not have the proper judgment of page space which comes only through experience in working with comic book material. So when he comes to the final pages of his script he finds that his story is too long or too short to fit into six pages. New comic script writers usually miss the mark by a wide margin.

The easiest answer to this problem seems to be a revision of the end of the story to make it fit. But if the ending is cut, the writer may end the story too abruptly without giving the reader a chance to feel satisfied with the way it ended. Or he may crowd the ending and leave out something important to the story line. This is particularly the case with detective or crime stories in which you must summarize, for the reader, the important clues and incidents that add up into the defeat of the villain or crooks.

By the same token, it may seem easy to fill in the tail end of a story that is too short to cover six pages. But a comic book story is, in most cases, an action story. The movement of the story line should become faster and faster until it hits its peak at the climax point. Putting in additional material at the end of the story could destroy this pacing. It would level off suddenly and make the story drag instead of racing to its finish. Also, the writer is taking the chance of giving his story an anticlimax. This will happen if the writer adds material to his story after the point where the story problem has been solved. Or, if the story line drags enough to give the reader a chance to add up all the clues and be *sure* of the way it will end.

This problem will be with the new comic script writer until he gains a lot of experience in the field. Even after that, he will have trouble with it from time to time. My answer to it has become my *method* of working a story outline into a final script.

First, I put my opening scene into panel form. Then, instead of doing the next scene, I put my final scene into my rough draft. I now know *exactly* how much page space I need for a good opening and closing of my story. If the story has just two middle scenes, I work half of the second scene *toward* the middle and half of the third scene *backward* toward the middle. I can judge, at this point, whether the story will fit the space I

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have left or whether it will be too long or too short. If it does not fit, I simply rework the remaining story material until it does.

In cases where my story has three or more middle scenes, I work the first two scenes into script form, then do the last two scenes next, and finish the story in the middle. This method of putting a story into comic script format may seem a little awkward but it has saved me much valuable time. I hope it does the same for you.

### How to Submit Your Script

THE comic script writer should, in almost all cases, submit a synopsis of each story. This synopsis is typed, single space, one one side of a sheet of white bond paper. It should be brief. Each synopsis gives the editor not only the story idea, or plot, but also the logical motivation for the actions of the characters.

Comic book editors do not want one-story writers. By submitting at least six story synopses at a time, you will save mailing expenses and also prove to the editor that you are serious about producing material he can use in his books. The editor will often take the time, if your work shows you have studied his magazines thoroughly, to help revise a story idea so that a synopsis can be O.K.'d. The editor's O.K. of a synopsis does not necessarily mean he agrees to buy the story in its final script form. It simply means that he likes the story "idea" in its synopsis form and hopes you will be able to produce an acceptable script of the story.

Script formats vary slightly with individual markets but they do fall into three general types. The most common type looks somewhat like a radio script. Another type looks much like a TV script—divided at about the middle of the sheet—with story material on either side. The third type of format looks like a comic book page, as it will appear in the comic book, because the writer divides the sheet of paper into boxes, or panels.

Each new page of the story, as it will appear in the comic book, should always start on another sheet of paper. Suppose Page 1 of the story uses up all the first sheet of paper and about half of the second sheet. Then Page 2 of the story will begin on the third sheet of paper. To show you how the formats vary from each other, here are examples of the three types, using the same material.

## FORMAT NO. 1

*Panel 1* Marvel Jr. now with Manfred. Basement door is slamming behind Mrs. Marks. Marvel Jr. looks rather amazed about meeting a real ghost.

Sound: Slam!

Marvel Jr.: Marks got frightened again when he saw you! You really ARE a ghost!

Manfred: Oh, yes indeed! My name is Manfred!

*Panel 2* Manfred showing tire chains to Marvel Jr., in basement.

Manfred: I've been living down here for three weeks—not bothering anyone! But tonight I saw these old tire chains! I just couldn't help rattling them a little!

## FORMAT NO. 2

*Panel 1*

Marvel Jr. now with Manfred. Basement door is slamming behind Mr. Marks. Marvel Jr. looks amazed about meeting ghost.

Sound: SLAM!

Marvel Jr.: Mr. Marks got frightened again when he saw you! You really ARE a ghost!

Manfred: Oh, yes indeed! My name is Manfred!

*Panel 2*

Manfred showing tire chains to Marvel Jr. in basement.

Manfred: I've been living here for three weeks—not bothering anyone! But tonight I saw these old tire chains. I just couldn't help rattling them a little!

## FORMAT NO. 3

Sound: SLAM!

Marvel Jr.: Mr. Marks got frightened again when he saw you! You really ARE a ghost!

Manfred: Oh, yes indeed! My name is Manfred!

Marvel Jr. now with Manfred. Basement door is slamming behind Mr. Marks. Marvel Jr. looks amazed about meeting a real ghost.

(1)

Manfred: I've been living down here for three weeks—not bothering anyone! But tonight I saw these old tire chains! I just couldn't help rattling them a little!

Manfred showing tire chains to Marvel Jr. in basement.

(2)

AS of January, 1955, there were 326 comic book titles on sale at newsstands. The breakdown was: 54 monthlies, 209 bimonthlies, 29 quarterlies, 24 one-shots. Average pages on sale was: 5,845. In January, 1954, there were 398 titles with an average of 7,540 pages on sale. This shows a definite decline in comic book sales during the year.

The loss of sales, felt by most publishers, can be attributed to the adverse criticism directed against the comic book field by parent-teacher organizations, religious groups, and civic leaders concerned with juvenile delinquency. However, the newly created Comics Code of Ethics, intended to correct the criticisms against the so-called "bad" comic books, will probably boost sales during this year.

But the comic book market, in general, is still

very unstable at this time. Editors are keeping their backlog of material down to a minimum. Some of them have requested not to be listed and others definitely do not want any story material at present.

### MARKET LIST

**Ace Magazines**, 23 W. 47th. St., New York 36. Elaine T. Bierman, Managing Editor. Wants synopses only from New York writers. They should be 2 or 3 typewritten pages—double-spaced. Wants 7- and 8-page scripts with 6 or 7 panels per page. Payment, \$7 per page. Query on "fiction" short-shorts. Titles: *Baffling Mysteries*, *Complete Love*, *Crime Must Pay the Penalty*, *Glamorous Romances*, *Love at First Sight*, *Love Experiences*, *Navy Action*, *Real Love*, *Ten Story Love*, *The Beyond*, *The Hand of Fate*, *Trapped*, *Web of Mystery*. Prefers Format No. 1.

**American Comics**, 45 W. 45th St., New York 19. Richard E. Hughes, Editor. Will work with freelance writers in New York area and outside if work shows some promise. No "fiction" short-shorts. Pay rates arranged with authors. Titles: Adventures into the Unknown, Commander Battle & The Atomic Sub, Cookie, Giggle, Ha Ha, Lovelorn, Out of the Night, Romantic Adventures, Spencer Spook, The Clutching Hand, The Hooded Horseman, The Kilroys, Tippee Tim, Young Heroes. Prefers Format No. 1.

**Animirth Comics, Inc.**, 655 Madison Ave., New York. No report. Titles: Cowboy Action, Homer the Happy Ghost, Lovers, Marines in Battle, Western Outlaws, Western Thrillers. Query before submitting any material.

**Archie Comic Publications, Inc.**, 241 Church St., New York 13. Harry Shorten, Editor. Payment, \$8 per page up. No "fiction" short-shorts. Query before submitting material. Titles: Archie, Archie Annual, Archie's Christmas Stocking, Joke Book, Mechanics, Pals 'n' Gals; Betty & Veronica, Betty & Veronica Annual, Jughead, Jughead Annual, Katy Keene, Laugh, Pep Comics, Reggie, Super Duck, Suzie, Wilbur. Format No. 3 should be used.

**Avon Periodicals, Inc.**, 575 Madison Ave., New York 22. Sol Cohen, Editor. Titles: All True Detectives, Captain Steve Savage, Jesse James, Kit Carson, Peter Rabbit, Realistic Romances, Strange Worlds, Wild Bill Hickok. Only two titles have appeared during the last four months. Query first.

**Charles Biro Comics**, 113 W. 57th St., New York 19. Charles Biro, Producer. Query before submitting any material. Titles: Boy Comics, Daredevil, Crime Does Not Pay.

**Charlton Comics, Inc.**, Charlton Bldg., Derby, Conn. All books produced by Al Fago Studios, 1472 Broadway, New York. Query before submitting material. Titles: Atomic Mouse, Cowboy Love, Cowboy Western, Crime & Justice, Danger & Adventure, Don Winslow, Fight Against the Guilty, From Here to Insanity, Funny Animals, Gabby Hayes, Hot Rod & Racing Cars, Lash La Rue, Monte Hale, My Little Margie, Rocky Lane, Romantic Story, Six Gun Heroes, Space Adventures, Mysterious Adventures, Racket Squad in Action, Strange Suspense Stories, Sweethearts, Tex Ritter, The Blue Beetle, This Is Suspense, True Life Secrets, T.V. Teens, Win a Prize, Zoo Funnies.

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**Dell Comics**, Western Printing & Lithographing Co., 200 Fifth Ave., New York 10. Publishes over 100 titles, part of them produced in New York City, part in Beverly Hills, Calif. Payment, on acceptance, \$6 per page and up. The "fiction" short-shorts are bought by both offices at \$25 per story. In New York, Matthew H. Murphy edits: Angel, Beetle Bailey, Ben Bowie & His Mountain Men, Captain Davey Jones, Champion, Cisco Kid, Double Trouble with Goobers, Drum Beat, Flash Gordon, Francis the Mule, Frosty the Snowman, Hansel & Gretel, Henry, Henry Aldrich, Hi-Yo Silver, Howdy Doody, I Love Lucy, Indian Chief, Jace Pearson of the Texas Rangers, Jungle Jim, Knights of the Round Table, Krazy Kat, Lassie, Little Iodine, Little Lulu, L.L. & Her Special Friends, L.L. on Vacation, L.L.-Tubby Annual, Little Scouts, Lone Ranger, L. R.'s Western Treasury, Luke Short's Six Gun Ranch, Mowgli Jungle Book, Mr. Magoo & Gerald McBoing Boing, Napoleon, New Funnies, Pogo Parade, Pogo Possum, Popeye, Priscilla's Pop, Raggedy Ann & Andy, Rivets, Rootie Kazootie, Roy Rogers, Rusty Riley, Santa Claus Funnies, Sergeant Preston, Silver-tip, Sir Lancelot, Son of Black Beauty, Steve Canyon, Super Circus, The Brownies, The Hand of Zorro, The Little King, The Little People, The Mask of Zorro, The Quest of Zorro, Tom Corbett, Tonto, Trigger, Turok Son of Stone, Walt Disney's The Sword & the Rose, Western Marshal, Western Roundup, Wild Bill Elliott, Zane Grey's King of the Royal Mounted, Z.G.'s Outlaw Trail, Z.G.'s Shadow on the Trail, Z.G.'s The Rustlers, Z.G.'s The Lost Wagon Trail, Z.G.'s To the Last Man.

**Dell Comics** (continued).

Alice Cobb (Whitman Publishing Co., 9916 Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif.) edits: A Christmas Treasury, Andy Hardy, Annie Oakley, Beany & Cecil, Bozo, Buck Jones, Bugs Bunny, B.B. Album, B.B. Christmas Funnies, B.B. Vacation Parade, Charlie McCarthy, Daffy, Elmer Fudd, Gene Autry, Johnny Mack Brown, King Richard & The Crusaders, Lantz's Andy Panda, L.'s Oswald, L.'s Woody Woodpecker, L.'s W. W. Back to School, Little Beaver, Looney Tunes, Mary Jane & Sniffles, Porky Pig, Queen of the West-Dale Evans, Range Rider, Red Ryder, Tex Allen, Rin Tin Tin, Spike & Type, Tarzan, Tarzan's Jungle Annual, The Two Mouseketeers, Tom & Jerry, T. & J. Winter Carnival, T. & J. Winter Fun, Tweety & Sylvester, Walt Disney's Ben & Me, Chip 'n' Dale, Christmas Parade, Comics & Stories, Daisy Duck's Diary, Donald Duck, D.D. Album, D.D. Beach Party, D.D. Fun Book, Li'l Bad Wolf, Mickey Mouse, M.M. Birthday Party, Pluto, Silly Symphonies, Stormy, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, Uncle Scrooge, Vacation Parade. Use Format No. 3.

**Educational Comics, Inc.**, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12. William M. Gaines, Publisher. Most of the old titles are being dropped. Not in the freelance market for any material at this time. Have just announced five new titles: Aces High, Extra!, Impact, M.D., Valor.

**Famous Funnies Publications**, 500 Fifth Ave., New York 18. Harold A. Moore, Editor. Payment, \$5-\$12 per page. Query on "fiction" short-shorts. Titles: Conquest, Dover the Bird, Famous Funnies, New Heroic Comics, Personal Love, Tales from the Great Book, The Amazing Willie Mays. Format No. 1.

**Farrell Comic Group**, 500 Fifth Ave., New York 36. Ruth Roche, Editor. Query before submitting any material. Titles: All True Romances, Lonely Hearts, Samson, The Flame, Vooda.

**Fiction House**, 1658 Summer St., Stamford, Conn. Jack Byrne, Editor. All material staff-written. Publishing only occasional titles in the comic field now.

**Lev Gleason Comics**, 114 East 32nd St., New York 16. Harold Straubing, Editor, with Vivian Fields handling the love book. Query before submitting any material. Titles: Black Diamond Western, Boy Loves Girl, Crime & Punishment. Format No. 1.

**Allen Hardy Associates, Inc.**, 500 Fifth Ave., New York 36. Allen Hardy, Producer. Wants the unusual, not hackneyed story material. All queries on scripts, art, and "fiction" short-shorts should be directed to Jerry Feldman, Editor. Payment, \$8 per page. Titles: Danger, Death Valley, Dynamite, Little Noodnik, Little Amigo, Love and Kisses, Western Rider.

**Harvey Publications, Inc.**, 1860 Broadway, New York 19. Query Leon Harvey before submitting synopses. Assignments usually given to New York writers. Interviews held on Thursdays to discuss specific ideas, stories, editorial helps. Payment, \$5-\$7 per page. Titles: Black Cat Mystery, Blondie, Casper the Friendly Ghost, Chamber of Clues, Dagwood, Dick Tracy, First Love, First Romance, Hi-School Romance, Horace & Dotty Dripple, Joe Palooka, Little Audrey, Little Dot, Little Max, Mazie, Paramount Animated Animals, Thrills of Tomorrow, True Bride's Experiences, True Love Problems & Advice, Warfront, Witches Western Tales.

**Magazine Enterprises**, 11 Park Place, New York 7. Raymond C. Krantz, Editor. Query before submitting material. Titles: Cave Girl, I'm a Cop, Mysteries of Scotland Yard, Red Mask, Straight Arrow, Straight Arrow's Fury, The Avenger, The Black Phantom, The Durango Kid, The Ghost Rider.

**Mainline Publications**, 1860 Broadway, New York 23. Jack Kirby, Editor. No report. Titles: Bulls Eye, In Love, Police Trap, The Guys in the Foxhole.

**National Comics Publications**, 480 Lexington Ave., New York 17. Whitney Ellsworth, Editor. Wants material only from New York area. Payment is as high as any in the field. All "fiction" short-shorts are staff-written. Titles: Action Comics, Adventure Comics, Adventures of Bob Hope, Adventures of Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis, A Date with Judy, All American Men of War, All Star Western, Batman, Big Town, Buzzy, Detective Comics, Everything Happens to Harvey, Flippy & Flop, Funny Stuff, Gang Busters, Here's Howie Comics, Hollywood Funny Folks, Hopalong Cassidy, House of Mystery, Leading Screen Comics, Leave It to Binky, Movietown Animal Antics, Mr. District Attorney, Mutt & Jeff, Mystery in Space, Our Army at War, Peter Panda, Peter Pork-chop, Real Screen Comics, Rex the Wonder Dog, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Star Spangled War Stories, The Fox & the Crow, Tomahawk, Western Comics, Wonder Woman, World's Finest Comics. Format No. 1.

**Geo. A. Pfleum, Publisher, Inc.**, 38 West Fifth St., Dayton 2, Ohio. Joseph G. Shaller, Editor. Publishes a biweekly Catholic comic-type magazine for 5th to 8th grade school children. Payment, on acceptance, depends on material but runs about \$8 per script page. Uses "fiction" short-shorts of 1,500 words per story or per chapter. Scripts can be scientific, adventurous, or historical in background. No science-fiction or stories depicting crime, immorality, violence, etc. Does not appear on newsstands, so get back copies from local Catholic schools or from the publisher. Study books carefully before submitting any stories to this market. Title: Treasure Chest. Format No. 3 is acceptable.

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York area. Pays \$15 per page up, depending on research needed for material. Some material is very technical. All material is assigned. Query Miss Glasser for specific information, stating your qualifications for handling the type of work.

**Premier Magazines, Inc.**, 11 East 44th St., New York 17. No report. Titles: Masked Ranger, Mysterious Stories, Police Against Crime, True Love Confessions. Query before submitting any material.

**Quality Comic Group**, 347 Madison Ave., New York 17. Al Grenet, Editor. Will work with out-of-town writers as well as local writers but assignments are based on quality of story material. Synopses first. Uses two-page "fiction" short-shorts but wants to see synopses on these before giving an O.K. Payment by arrangement with author. Titles: Blackhawk, Brides Romances, Candy, Exciting Romances, G.I. Combat, Girls in Love, Heart Throbs, Love Confessions, Love Letters, Love Secrets, Marmaduke Mouse, Plastic Man, T-Man, Wedding Bells.

**Standard Magazines, Inc.**, 10 E. 40th St., New York 16. At present they are turning out just two titles on a regular basis: Dennis the Menace, Supermouse. They do not want any material at this time. Harry Slater, Business Manager, informs me that they contemplate adding some new titles but have not decided what they will be.

**Stanhall Publications, Inc.**, 480 Lexington Ave., New York 17. Hal Seeger, Editor. No report. Titles: Broadway-Hollywood Blackouts, G.I. Jane, The Farmer's Daughter.

**Stanmor Publications, Inc.**, 261 Fifth Ave., New York 16. Harry Kantor, Editor. At present needs a limited amount of material. Will work with any writer—but he must know comic technique! Good writers always in demand. No present need for "fiction" pieces. Prices vary depending on writer but are usual rates in this field. War comics must be realistic! Prefers "fictionized" true stories using dramatic pictures. These are comics, so the pictures are very important. Adventure comics should be rugged he-man stuff with switch endings. Mystery comics should have switch endings a la TV! Titles: Action Adventures, Battle Attack, Battle Cry, Battle Fire, Battle Squadron, Climax!, Diary Confessions, Flying Aces, Navy Patrol, Navy Task Force, Prize Mystery, Silver Kid Western.

**Sterling Comics, Inc.**, 480 Lexington Ave., New York 17. Martin Smith, Editor. No report. Titles: After Dark, Captain Flash, The Informer, The Tormented, Surprise Adventures.

**St. John Publishing Corp.**, 545 Fifth Ave., New York 17. Phyllis Hoffman, Editor. In reviewing synopses from new writers, Mrs. Hoffman wants to see tear sheets from published material in other comic

books. Not buying "fiction" short-shorts at present. Payment, \$5 per page. Titles: Abbott & Costello, Adventures of Mighty Mouse, Cinderella Love, Diary Secrets, Dinky Duck, Fritzi Ritz, Going Steady, Hackle & Jeckle, Kid Cowboy, Little Eva, Mighty Mouse Comics, Paul Terry's Comics, Teen Age Romances, Tip Top Comics, Wild Boy.

**Story Comics, Inc.**, 7 East 44th St., New York 17. No report. Titles: Fight Against Crime, Fight Against the Guilty, Mysterious Adventures. Query first.

**Superior Publishers, Ltd.**, 2382 Dundas Street West, Toronto 9, Ont., Canada. W. Zimmerman, Editor. Not buying any material at present. Titles: My Secret Marriage, Secret Romances, U.S. Fighting Air Force.

**D. C. Thomson & Co., Ltd.**, Courier Place, Dundee, Scotland. Newspaper publishers who produce English comic book supplements. Will consider comic strips or stories in pictures or feature pages, designed to suit young readers, boys and girls between 6 and 14. Particularly interested in reprinting original art work in black-and-white line drawings which is not already handled by any of the American syndicates.

**Timely Comics, Inc.**, 655 Madison Ave., New York 21. Alan Sulman, Script Editor. Not in the market for script material from new freelance writers at this time. Always query this market on current needs before submitting any synopses. Payment, \$7 per page. Titles: Annie Oakley, Apache Kid, Astonishing, Black Knight, Battle, Battle Action, Battlefront, Battleground, Combat Casey, Combat Kelley, Cowboy Action, Della Vision, Homer—The Happy Ghost, Journey into Mystery, Journey into Unknown Worlds, Jungle Action, Jungle Tales, Kid Colt, Lorna the Jungle Girl, Love Romances, Lovers, Love Tales, Marines in Action, Marines in Combat, Marvel Tales, Meet Miss Bliss, Millie the Model, Miss America, My Girl Pearl, My Own Romance, Mystery Tales, Mystic, Navy Action, Navy Combat, Outlaw, Patsy Walker, Patsy & Hedy, Patsy & Her Pals, Rawhide Kid, Ringo Kid, Secret Story Romances, Strange Tales, Submariner, Tales of Justice, The Outlaw Kid, True Secrets, Two-Gun Kid, Uncanny Tales, War Comics, Western Outlaws, Western Tales of Black Rider, Wild West.

**Toby Press, Inc.**, 17 East 45th St., New York 17. Mel Lazarus, Editor. Payment, about \$7 per page. Query before submitting any material. Titles: Billy the Kid, Felix the Cat, Great Lover Romances, John Wayne, Ramar of the Jungle, Return of the Outlaw, Tell It to the Marines.

**Ziff-Davis Publishing Co.**, 366 Madison Ave., New York 17. Herbert Rogoff, Editor. One title: G.I. Joe. All material is staff-written. Does not plan any new titles at this time.

## Marketing Isn't Hide and Seek

By C. WILLIAM WISER

WHEN is ready? When do you slip those type-written pages of inspiration into the brown envelope and off into the wide blue yonder? Fourth draft? Fourteenth?

You'll know—that is, if you're a writer you'll know. If you have that professional workman's approach, the craftsman's pride in a finished job, the feeling will come over you on the last rereading. Crumpled, discarded pages of former drivel will cover the floor around your typewriter like snowdrifts.

"This is it!" will hammer in the back of your brain, followed by an overall glow. Everything jives, the hinges are oiled, the wheels revolve.

But you have a second draft of a white-hot idea. you protest, and you know the market. Maybe the idea is a little hazy, but it's GOOD, you insist. It's ORIGINAL—the typing is a little slipshod (the ribbon dried up on you), but the editor will overlook it. It's the idea that counts . . .

Put down that postage stamp!

Editors are smothered with ideas; their desks groan with groan with ideas, thousands of them. But a polished finished-product, ready for the presses, is bond paper of a different color. When one of those comes in, our editor friend takes out his checkbook.

Then why waste time and postage? Sooner or

AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

later the hard, cruel fact is going to penetrate your brain: "This thing has to be rewritten."

Of course it has to be rewritten. Save yourself the discouragement of seeing those return envelopes in the mail box. It should have been rewritten in the first place, before your material ever sees the light of the Post Office Department.

When the alarm sounds and your blood starts racing, rewrite again. Just for kicks. Editors may not make a production of it, but they like to see clean copy. Ever hear of the final rule tacked on to most every contest: Neatness Counts!

You've heard countless examples of writers who sent in their scribbled masterpieces on brown wrapping paper, I know. Maybe the editor did buy it. Maybe the writer did win the Pulitzer Prize . . . but maybe he could have won the Nobel Prize with a typewriter.

There aren't that many geniuses around, anyway. And you aren't one of them or you wouldn't be reading this. You and I are professional writers, fighting it out, tooth and claw, with each other. And my stuff is going to be double-spaced with one-inch margins; unless you're the undiscovered wrapping paper genius, yours better be the same.

How many times have editors received practically the same story or article, perhaps from different viewpoints, or maybe using different "gimmicks"? But one of them came in clean and flat, looking like a starched white collar—and the other might have come out of a soiled clothes basket. Which one would you buy? Which one would you read?

You can always toss off an extra draft just for neatness' sake. Maybe it will make the difference of a sale.

And now that you've got your creation completed, really completed—all of the miscellaneous wordage deposited in the waste can—you should have a neat little package, looking like a Christmas Gift to the Editor. Now, friend, you're ready.

Once the script is mailed, you can forget about it. You gave it everything you had; start in on your next production. If you get the manuscript back, soothe your ego by considering the editor a raving maniac. Then send it off again.

Remember, you're not playing Hide and Seek: "Here-I-come-ready-or-not." In this game it's "To market, to market, to get a fat check."

## COMING IN MAY

If your spring thoughts turn to agriculture—or to vacation—you'll find important market lists in the June *Author & Journalist*. There will be the annual list of farm journals and the annual list of markets for travel material. Each will show a number of changes from the 1954 list.

In addition, the May issue will contain outstanding articles on fiction and other popular writing fields. Plus news direct from the desks of magazine and book editors—and the rest of the features you like in *Author & Journalist*.

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## Contests and Awards

The Fund for the Republic, Inc., 1 E. 54th St., New York 22, offers prizes for television scripts in two categories: an hour-long drama, a half-hour documentary.

The first prize in each is \$5,000. In the drama competition there are a second prize of \$2,500 and ten additional prizes of \$750 each. The documentary competition offers six additional prizes of \$1,500 each.

The subject matter of the entries is to concern "any broad concept or specific aspect of those principles of freedom and liberty guaranteed in our founding documents"—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Entries need not be in finished shooting-script form but must indicate the essential details of direction, staging, and camera work. Any number of scripts may be submitted but none will be returned.

Closing date: May 31.

The Fund for the Republic was established by the Ford Foundation to deal with civil liberties and racial and religious discrimination in the United States. It has an endowment of \$15,000,000.

— *A&J* —

The Poets' Study Club of Terre Haute, Ind., is sponsoring a nationwide contest for poems, with prizes of \$5, \$3, \$2. There are also special prizes for poems by residents of Indiana.

A contestant may submit two poems, each no longer than 16 lines, either serious or humorous.

Closing date: July 15. Address Mabel Skeen, 454 S. 12th St., Terre Haute, Ind.

— *A&J* —

*Seventeen*, 488 Madison Ave., New York 22, has announced its tenth annual contest for unpublished stories of 2,000-3,500 words by boys and girls from 13 to 19, inclusive. There is a first prize of \$500, a second of \$200, three third prizes of \$100 each. The five winning stories will appear in *Seventeen*.

Judging will be on the basis of overall literary merit, plot development, characterization, naturalness of dialogue, validity of situation, and suitability for publication in *Seventeen*.

Closing date, July 31.

— *A&J* —

The Eastern Kentucky Writers League is sponsoring a poetry contest open only to residents of Kentucky and Kentuckians temporarily outside the state. Prizes are \$15 first, \$10 second, \$5 third.

Entries must deal with some historical phase of Kentuckiana and must not exceed 20 lines. The contestant's name must not appear on the poem but must be in an accompanying sealed envelope.

Closing date, August 24. Address Mrs. Sylvia Trent Auxier, Box 503, Pikeville, Ky.

### FREE! FREE! FREE! Analysis of a *THIS WEEK* SHORT-SHORT by Robert Oberfirst

*THIS WEEK* with a circulation of about 10,000,000 publishes the best short-shorts obtainable and pays the highest rates. This booklet shows what makes a *THIS WEEK* short-short tick. Stewart Beach, Fiction Editor of *THIS WEEK*, writes me regarding this booklet: "I read with a great deal of interest your analysis of a *THIS WEEK* short-short and I thought it was just right. I felt it was something of a classic . . ." It will be mailed free to all writers seriously interested in writing short-short fiction.

**ROBERT OBERFIRST, Literary Agent, P. O. Box 539, Ocean City, New Jersey**

### Previously Announced

Albert Ralph Korn Contest, attention Lane Van Hook, 154 Pearsall Drive, Mount Vernon, N. Y. for poem not exceeding 32 lines. Prize, \$100. Closing date, October 1. (*Author & Journalist*, February.)

Central City Opera House Association, 1502 Cleveland Place, Denver 2, Colo., for a romantic play based on the discovery of gold in Colorado. Prize, \$10,000 plus royalties. Closing date, July 1, 1957. (*Author & Journalist*, January.)

Charles Austin Beard Memorial Prize, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 501 Madison Ave., New York 22, for a book manuscript in American history. Prize, \$500 plus publication contract. Closing date, July 31. (*Author & Journalist*, January.)

Cultural Freedom Award, Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 105 W. 40th St., New York 18, for a book-length MS. on civil liberties and intellectual freedom. Award, \$1,000. Closing date, May 31. (*Author & Journalist*, January.)

*Maclean's Magazine*, 481 University Ave., Toronto, Ont., Canada, awards for novels by Canadians or by non-Canadians using a Canadian theme. Award, \$5,000. Continuing competition—no closing date. (*Author & Journalist*, January.)

*Modern Romances* Story Contest, 261 Fifth Ave., New York 16, for true-to-life stories. Prizes, \$100-\$1,000. Closing dates, April 30, August 31, December 31. (*Author & Journalist*, January.)

Vermont Development Commission, Montpelier, Vt., contests for photographs taken in Vermont. Four seasonal contests, with 45 prizes \$5-\$200 in each. (*Author & Journalist*, November, 1954.)

Zondervan's Christian Textbook Contest, 847 Ottawa Ave., Grand Rapids 2, Mich. Prizes, \$1,500, \$350, \$150. Closing date, September 30. (*Author & Journalist*, March, 1954.)

Zondervan's Juvenile Christian Fiction Contest, 847 Ottawa Ave., Grand Rapids 2, Mich., for stories 17,500-50,000 words. Prizes: \$750, \$150, \$100. Closing date, June 30. (*Author & Journalist*, March, 1954.)

### Discontinued Publications

*American Family*

*The Glass* (England)

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**HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL POEM**. Clear, terse, complete. 96 pages, one dollar, postpaid. Gail Brook Burkett, 1020 Lake Shore Drive, Evanston, Illinois.

**"SELECTIONS FROM THORNTON."** Great book of classical poetry, 60 pages, only 35c. George B. Thornton, Box 289, Wilberforce, Ohio.

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**MARKET LISTS!** Back numbers of AUTHOR & JOURNALIST listing various types of markets for manuscripts are available, as long as they last, of 25c each postpaid. September 1954 (Specialized Magazines), October 1954 (Little Magazines, Company Publications), November 1954 (Book Publishers), December, 1954 (Business Publications—sometimes called Trade Journals), January, 1955 (Handy Market List), February, 1955 (Juvenile Magazines), March, 1955 (Filler Markets, Jewish Publications), April, 1955 (Markets for Poetry, Including Light Verse). Send 25c each (coin or stamps) to AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, 1313 National Bank of Topeka Bldg., Topeka, Kansas.

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Vol. II, No. 4

May, 1955

## Over 500,000 Promotion Pieces Distributed in U.S. and Abroad As Part of Vantage's Greatest Sales Campaign

### Another Vantage Book Wins Major Publicity

Mary Elizabeth Kelly's exciting new book, *Adventures of An Exchange Teacher*, a Travel Magazine Book Club Selection, has received some of the top radio, TV and newspaper publicity in the nation. Currently a resident of Fairfield, Conn., the author recently appeared with Jinx Falkenburg on her popular NBC-TV show, *Jinx's Diary*. This came on the heels of radio interviews throughout her local area.

#### "N. Y. DAILY NEWS" RUNS FEATURE STORY

The *N. Y. Daily News*, America's largest newspaper, carried a feature story about Miss Kelly in which the reactions of her students were given to the contents of her book. In a special Sunday feature, the *Bridgeport Post* printed a three-column picture and story of Mae Kelly in her Fairfield school room and described in great detail the experiences she encountered while teaching in England.

Reaction has also come from overseas to this *Vantage* best-seller. In a three-column review, the *Birmingham (Eng.) Mail* declares at one point, "Miss Kelly is very kind in her judgments of us Brits." Negotiations are presently under way for a British edition of this book.

Would you like to know more about our plan of co-operative publishing, whereby *Vantage* authors get such wonderful publicity breaks? It's all explained in a handsome, illustrated booklet which you may have free, just by mailing the coupon on this page.



### Vantage Novel Hits Best-seller Pace

"*Flames of Darkness*, by Harry Van Stack, has been our number one best-seller for over a year," says Carl J. Miller, owner of The Book Shop, Sandusky, Ohio. Like Mr. Miller, dealers throughout the country are reporting increased sales on their *Vantage* titles—an important reason why so many authors choose *Vantage Press* to publish their books.

### California Author Gains Coveted Hall of Fame

Dr. Marion Michael Null, author of *VANTAGE'S The Forgotten Pioneer*, was recently chosen for one of the most cherished honors available to a living Californian—membership in the California Historical Society's distinguished Hall of Fame. Honored for his top-rated, definitive study of Davy Crockett, Dr. Null will have his picture placed in the famed Hartsook Portrait Collection, alongside such notable Californians as Herbert Hoover and Luther Burbank. For exciting reading, ask your bookseller, or write directly to the publisher, for *The Forgotten Pioneer*. Profusely illustrated, it retails for \$3.50.

### Literature Sent to Dealers, Schools, Libraries, Consumers

New York, N. Y.—In the past six months, *Vantage Press* sent out more than a half-million pieces of direct mail as part of an advertising and sales campaign that has resulted in the greatest sales volume in *Vantage* history. It is this type of activity that has made *Vantage Press* the largest co-operative publisher in the nation, and the seventh largest in the nation.

On a regular basis, mailings have gone to bookstores, wholesalers, high schools, colleges and libraries in the United States and overseas. Literature on religious books was sent at Easter and Christmas to every Protestant and Catholic bookstore in the country. Through Acme Code Company, *Vantage's* foreign distributor, every mailing piece released in the U. S. was also sent to 1,000 overseas outlets.

In addition to these campaigns, mailings on specialized books went straight to the consumer. One mailing reached 150,000 nurses. More than 75,000 individuals were approached on a book of humor. A total of 25,000 math teachers received material on two mathematics books. Other mailings went to business executives, art teachers, and a host of other groups calling their attention to a series of specialized books.

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